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DE RUEHSB #0288/01 0961530
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4336
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2764
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2886
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1332
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2151
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2507
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2934
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5375
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2053
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000288

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MICHELLE GAVIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: LACK OF FUNDS LEAD TO ZIM PARLIAMENTARY RECESS

REF: A. HARARE 281
[1](#)B. HARARE 264

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Parliament has announced it will adjourn until May
[1](#)12. This is due to a lack of funds to pay MPs housing and
travel allowances while Parliament is in session.
Separately, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) governor Gideon
Gono's recent offer to give MPs secondhand central bank
vehicles is causing a furor with Finance Minister Tendai Biti
who continues to challenge the bank's quasi-fiscal
activities. END SUMMARY.

No Funds for Parliament, But Gono Offers Cars

[1](#)2. (C) After several weeks of Parliamentary activity,
including creating portfolio committees and scrutinizing the
activities of government ministries (reftels), Zimbabwe's
House of Assembly (HOA) announced it would adjourn until May
[1](#)12. Israel Chilimanzi, a legislative advisor and training
consultant with close ties to MPs, told poloff on April 6
that the long delay was primarily due to lack of funds
available to pay hotel and fuel allowances while in Harare.
MPs have not been receiving these allowances since Parliament
resumed in January, and have been funding their travel out of
their own pockets.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The lack of allowances has become a bone of
contention with MPs and was raised during question time on
March 25. An MP asked Eric Matinenga, the Minister of
Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs (MDC-T), when
Parliament would receive their allowances. Matinenga
responded that MPs were serving their nation and should not
view their seat in Parliament as a job. MPs interpreted this

to mean that they would not be receiving funds any time soon, and many MPs were vocal in their displeasure.

14. (C) Another controversy has recently emerged surrounding vehicles for parliamentarians. Under the standing rules and orders of Parliament, MPs are entitled to receive a vehicle for transport between their home district and Harare. In the past this has typically been a twin cab Isuzu 4x4 truck, capable of handling rural roads. However, Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti (MDC-T) has made clear that his ministry does not have the funds to buy new vehicles. Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono has offered to give MPs used central bank vehicles, triggering another conflict between Biti and Gono and leading Biti to state that Gono has no business "engaging in quasi-fiscal activities." MDC-T chief whip, Innocent Gonese, told Chilimanzi that the RBZ had enough vehicles to give all 314 members of the HOA and Senate vehicles.

COMMENT

15. (C) Parliament's adjournment is unfortunate given what is expected to be a heavy legislative and reform workload for the MDC-led body. However, the delay is not altogether unexpected as many MPs have limited personal resources, and Qunexpected as many MPs have limited personal resources, and seasonally Parliament often recesses this time of year due to holidays and the end of the school term. It also does not mean that Parliament's work will come to a halt, as there are

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several legislative workshops involving dozens of MPs and administrative staff taking place in the next couple of weeks.

16. (C) Potentially more disturbing is Gono's offer to distribute cars to MPs, an offer that came just days before a motion to debate the role of the RBZ was to have occurred in Parliament. END COMMENT.

MCGEE